Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Washington, DC 20420

Replaced by VHA
Directive 1200-018, dated
March 28, 2001

VHA DIRECTIVE 98-056

December 9, 1998

QUARTERLY PATIENT CENSUS

1. PURPOSE: This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive provides policy and procedures for quarterly census of patients.

2. BACKGROUND: Quarterly census data is required in 1999 to provide timely and accurate medical and administrative information on all VHA medical center patients. The information will be used for resource allocation; healthcare planning; performance monitoring; and for reports to Congress. This interim approach is necessary until VHA has the capacity to implement inpatient reporting of daily admission data, including diagnostic information, into the National Patient Care database (NPCD).

3. POLICY: It is VHA policy for the quarterly census to be conducted on December 31, 1998, March 31, 1999, June 30, 1999, and September 30, 1999, at 11:59 P.M. The census files will be closed out at 6:00 P.M. Eastern time on January 15, 1999, April 16, 1999, July 16, 1999, and October 15, 1999.

4. ACTION

   a. The census will be taken on December 31, 1998, and will be taken on March 31, June 30, and September 30, 1999, at 11:59 P.M.

   b. Patients in the following facilities or levels of care will not be included in the census: non-VA hospitals; state home facilities; community nursing homes; and 1-day stay dialysis patients. Information on these patients is collected separately.

   c. The Chief, Health Information Management Section, or other appropriate official, will serve as the facility's Census Coordinator and will have administrative responsibility for the quarterly census.

   b. Census information will be reported and transmitted to the Austin Automation Center (AAC) using the Census Menu option of Version 5.3 of the Patient Information Management System (PIMS) Veterans Health Information Systems and Technology Architecture (VistA).

   c. The following procedures outline the steps which will be undertaken by each VistA supported medical center:

   (1) Census data will be entered into the Patient Treatment File (PTF) record in VistA using the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option.

(2) All PTF screens will be completed for each census patient as applicable.

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(3) The PTF record will be "closed for census" using the PTF 701 screen of the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option. Upon successful closing, the required data for the census will be selected from the PTF record and the census record will be created.

(4) The census record will then be released for transmission to the AAC using either the PTF 701 screen of the "Load/Edit PTF Data" option or the "Release Closed Census Records" option.

(5) Census data will be transmitted to the AAC using the "Transmit Census Records" option.

(6) Census data will be transmitted daily on or after January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, 1999. Census records indicating error corrections must be corrected, closed, released, and transmitted in time for receipt by AAC before 6:00 P.M. Central time on January 15, April 16, July 16, and October 16, 1998.

(7) PTF records of census patients discharged on or after January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1, 1999, will be closed, released and transmitted to the AAC when they are completed.

5. REFERENCES: None.

6. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY: Director, Health Information Office (193B3), is responsible for the content of this Directive.

7. RESCESSIONS: This VHA Directive expires October 31, 1999.

S/ Melinda Murphy for
Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.
Under Secretary for Health

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